

157.
AN
ADDRESS
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TO THE
CLERGY
CONCERNING THEIR
DEPARTURE
FROM THE
DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION.
DEDICATED TO
HIS GRACE
THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for
the OLD PATHS, where is the good way, and walk therein.*

By grace ye are saved.

Jerem. vi. 16.

Eph. ii. 5.

By a MEMBER of the Established Church.

L O N D O N,

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ADDRESSES
TO THE
CLERGY
CONCERNING
DEPARTURES
FROM THE
DOCTRINE OF THE REFORMATION



ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

By a Minister of the Gospel

JOHN DODD

Author of a new edition of the

Prayer Book, &c.

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TO HIS GRACE THE
Archbishop of Canterbury.

May it please your GRACE,

PRESUMING there is nothing advanced in the following pages as *truth*, which is contrary to the doctrines of that church in which your GRACE presides; and being persuaded that your GRACE's love for the truths of the gospel, upon which our church is founded, would induce you to countenance any well-meant attempt to vindicate them from the abuses of all opposers (even though they were found within the bosom of our church:) I thought I might be excused, if I took the liberty to cast this little piece at your GRACE's feet, in hopes of its meeting with your GRACE's

A 2

countenance

countenance and approbation. And I am encouraged to do it the rather, because I am assured, if I have used *sharpness* towards any of the clergy, your GRACE's discernment will immediately discover that it is against such only, as have acted contrary to their oaths and subscriptions, and have thereby forfeited all right to your GRACE's favour and protection, and to that honourable appellation of, MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: and also, that your GRACE's well-known candour and moderation will induce you to put the most favourable construction upon a piece of this kind; which to the guilty will probably have the appearance of *malevolent censure*, and *malicious slander*; and of being calculated to foment *divisions* and *discord* in the church. But far be such a thought from me, whose only aim and desire is, to promote the welfare, the peace, and the happiness of all men, as far as in me lies; consistently with that duty which I owe to my God, and a concern for his cause; which claim my first and chief regard.

Actuated by these motives alone (for which I can appeal to the great searcher of hearts) I took pen in hand to write the following
piece ;

piece ; and from the same motives it is now sent forth into the world : and if he, whose cause it is intended to defend, should be be pleased to give it his blessing ; if any are convinced of their errors by it, to him be all the glory : I am confident your GRACE will rejoice at such an event, whatever instrument may be employed to do it.

Wishing your GRACE all temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness, I remain, with the most profound respect,

May it please your GRACE,

Your GRACE's,

most dutiful, and,

most obedient

humble servant,

A MEMBER, &c. —

[7]

these things from the same motives as a
first term into the world: and if he whose
cause it is intended to defend, should be
be asked to give it his blessing, if any one
be asked to give it his curse, he is to him be
all the glory: I am convinced your cause
will receive as much as even, whatever in-
fluence may be employed to do it.
Wishing your Cause all triumph, suc-
cess, and eternal happiness, I remain, with
the most profound respect,

10 FEB 58

A MEMBER, &c.

[3]
A N

ADDRESS, &c.

My Lords and Rev^d. Gentlemen,

WHEN a private person takes upon him to bespeak, in a public manner, the attention of so august and venerable a body of men, as THE DIGNITARIES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND; surely nothing can justify the attempt, but a matter of the greatest importance. And if I had not been persuaded that the subject of this address was of the utmost consequence to thousands in this kingdom, I would not have undertaken it. But being confident that amongst such a body of learned men, there are many possessed of great candour and ingenuity, who will patiently attend to and consider the matter contained in an address of this kind, before they will pass their judgment on it or reject it: I am therefore incited to proceed in laying it before you. Which I shall endeavour to do with that
freedom

freedom and plainness of speech which the subject requires: remembering at the same time the respect that is due to those I am about to address. And if through any inadvertence I should advance what is contrary to matter of fact, I trust I shall always preserve a mind open to conviction and accessible to truth; and shall readily kiss the rod that kindly corrects my mistake.

If our rights were invaded, our properties by fraud or violence taken from us, and our lives were in danger; where should we fly for succour, but to the secular power? And from whom should we expect redress, but from those who are vested with that power, on purpose for our defence and protection? And an application of this kind could not be deemed impertinent, I presume, if our circumstances were such as rendered it necessary. Such a conduct must rather be judged prudent and commendable; as it would not only be the means of procuring redress, but would also be doing an honour to the power and to those vested with it. A like conduct then respecting things of an infinitely greater value than our rights, properties, or lives in this world, cannot surely by any wise person be condemned or disapproved of.

When therefore the invaluable privileges of the EVERLASTING GOSPEL are invaded, when we are in danger of being deprived of the inestimable blessings accruing therefrom, and when nothing less than the eternal interests and welfare of our
immortal

immortal souls are at stake; to whom should we fly for succour, and from whom should we expect redress? but from those who are exalted to eminent stations, and raised to high honours in the church, which are attended with an equal degree of power, that they might protect and defend us from all innovations and incroachments of that kind? Even you, *ye right reverend and reverend Sirs*; whose sacred office I honour with the highest veneration, esteeming it the most important that can be committed to a creature. Nor do I esteem it less awful than important; when I consider that all will be called to give a strict account of their trust before the judge of quick and dead, at the last great day. And I confess I even tremble at the thought of their case, who have been negligent of the important trust; who have not used the power, influence, and abilities, of which they have been possessed, to the ends designed; since God in his word declares, he will require the blood of all that perish through their negligence at their hands.

Since all then are so nearly concerned and interested in the things which pertain to the salvation of their souls, and since every one has a right to enquire, which is the way to obtain such a desirable end; permit one, who is deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of his own salvation, in the name and behalf of thousands more, seriously to ask the reason, "Why the doctrines

“ of the reformation, which are by law esta-
 “ blished in this land, which are perfectly consis-
 “ tent with the standard of truth, the sacred
 “ oracles, and for which so many eminent saints
 “ of God sealed their testimony to them with
 “ their blood; are now so wantonly thrown aside
 “ by the generality of our church-ministers, as
 “ obsolete and uncouth; and others substituted
 “ in their stead, which are quite repugnant both
 “ to the scriptures and these doctrines?

For my own part, I esteem it my honour and my peculiar privilege that I was born in this land of gospel-light, and that I was educated and brought up in the principles of the established church; (of which I profess myself to be an unworthy member;) for when I arrived to years of understanding, I was led to enquire into the meaning of the doctrines taught by her, as contained especially in that summary of them, the *thirty-nine articles*. And I was also led to search the scriptures, from whence her doctrines are professedly deduced; and (according to the light afforded me into those lively oracles) I found them to be perfectly consistent. And, permit me to add further, I have also found, to my still greater satisfaction and establishment in the belief of them, that they are, when cordially received into the heart, most happily influential in producing such peace and tranquility of soul, as no sensual gratifications can at all afford; and as
 leave

leave no room to doubt of their divine original. Finding my own advantage in these truths, I was naturally led to adhere the closer to them; and I became more strongly attached to them, as I experienced more of their power and salutary nature; perceiving them to be pregnant with the very essence of true happiness here; and that they afforded the best grounded hope, and opened to the view the most delightful prospect of a superlative happiness hereafter.

It was not long after I was made sensible what a rich treasure was put into my hands, before I discovered, to my great concern and grief, that these doctrines were not only seldom preached by the chief part of our ministers, but were by many of them preached against in the most public manner; and so obviously too, that it required no great judgment or penetration to perceive, that what was commonly advanced in the pulpits was both inconsistent with, and utterly subversive of the doctrines contained in the *articles, liturgy, and homilies* of our church. The serious consideration of which could not fail to affect, in the most sensible manner, all those who have experienced, in any degree, the advantage and benefit resulting from them.

The opposition to these doctrines is now spread so far and wide, and has been carried on so successfully, in prejudicing the minds of the people against them in every place, that those ministers who

think it a duty incumbent on them (as well as their privilege) from their solemn oaths and subscriptions, to defend and maintain them, in spite of all opposition, are stigmatized as *enemies to the church*, as *preachers of new and strange doctrines*, and as *disturbers of the peace*; are loaded with the greatest obloquy and contempt, and treated in the most illiberal manner both from the pulpit and the press. The multitude, who give themselves no trouble to enquire into the merits of the cause, but follow implicitly the example of their teachers therein, (who they doubt not must be in the right, being learned men,) join the cry raised against them; and pronounce them all to be madmen, enthusiasts, and what not? And all for no other reason, (for they are not charged with any immorality in their conduct,) but because they assert and maintain, inculcate, in season and out of season, with a becoming earnestness and zeal, the doctrines of the reformation; in order to rouse, if possible, a carnally secure and sleepy world to a serious consideration of such momentous truths, so highly interesting to all; and to put a stop to that inundation of error and wickedness, which is flowing in with a full tide in every part of the kingdom.

Severe as this charge may seem to be, men must be blinded by prejudice, or influenced by motives which bespeak them void of candour and impartiality; if contrary to all the evidence
which

which a true state of the case affords, they will nevertheless venture to deny the truth and justice of it. It is a truth so alarming, that all the true votaries of religion, (those I mean, who, not content with a mere form of godliness, strive to worship God in spirit and in truth) must be seized with a prodigious stupor indeed, if they can behold and reflect on these things, unmoved and unaffected. But this is not the case with all: many there are who are really alarmed at it; and although they have long beheld with the utmost concern, the cause of *vital religion* thus oppressed, yet they have still some hopes that her injured cause will be espoused (when her distressed case is once fully known) by some, whose power and influence being properly exerted, cannot fail of affording her some relief, and of raising her in some measure from that depressed state in which she at present languishes.

To you then her friends appeal; and from you they expect the redress, *O ye reverend gentlemen!* of those evils, which threaten utterly to subvert the constitution of our church, by removing from her those essential doctrines which are the very pillars thereof; in the defence of which our glorious reformers spilt their blood; which alone constitute and characterize her a *protestant reformed church*; and which have always been, no less the mark at which all the hellish, inveterate malice of that whore of Babylon and mother of abominations,

tions, *the church of Rome*, has been levelled, than they have been the glory and boast of all our church's true members, from the glorious æra of the reformation down to the present time; and also by substituting the most pernicious, heterodox doctrines in their stead.

How is the infinite dignity of the person of our divine Saviour, and the value of his work denied in this our day! What despite is done to the Spirit of grace! His blessed offices, operations, and influences upon the heart of man being treated as enthusiasm and madness. And how is all true, vital, inward religion endeavoured to be brought into disrepute and contempt! Things these which greatly alarm all who esteem it their privilege, their duty, and their interest to adhere most tenaciously to our excellent church's doctrines; and to be influenced by them in their whole conduct in life. Nor can they but be apprehensive, from a view and consideration of these things, that unless some step be speedily taken, in order to put a stop to the further spreading of these errors, and the general declension from our church's pure doctrines; that our land must ere long inevitably be enveloped again in the clouds of popish darkness, ignorance, and superstition: which all deviations from purity of doctrine have a manifest tendency to promote. And it is obvious to all who give themselves the trouble seriously to enquire into the matter, that our
modern

modern doctrines contain, (although in a somewhat refined way) the very essence of popery : as they are calculated to cherish that abominable spirit of *pride* and *self-sufficiency*, that is of the essence of our fallen nature ; and which the whole plan of man's redemption by grace, as revealed in the scriptures, is calculated to root out. For while *that* predominates in a man's heart, he cannot, *will not* submit to be saved by the free-grace of God through the blood and righteousness of a redeemer ; but is evermore going about to establish a righteousness of his own, upon which to expect the pardon of his sins and acceptance with God, and to build his hopes of eternal happiness upon. And the utmost he will submit, in his natural state, to be obliged to Christ for is, to make up his deficiencies ; still resting the cause of his salvation, chiefly, upon the merits of his own works and performances. For this our glorious reformers thought it their indispensable duty to abjure and separate from the romish communion ; perceiving plainly, by a divine light, that the word of God pointed out a way of salvation quite different from that, of being saved, either in whole or in part, by the righteousness of our own works ; that salvation is the work of a divine omnipotent arm, which must be exerted as well in the application of it to a sinner's soul, as in the working of it out when God was manifested in flesh ; ere a soul can be reconciled to God and be united
to

to Christ, so as to be *one spirit*. And that the agent of this great work is the Holy Spirit; whose office in the œconomy of man's redemption is, to *convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*: or in other words, to quicken, justify, and sanctify every soul that shall finally be saved.

But lest this charge, brought against the ministers of the day, should be too general, and the difference between the doctrines which they preach and those of the church, should not appear sufficiently obvious to justify the charge; I must beg leave to instance in some few of the most essential, in order to point it out: and also to shew, that when these doctrines are touched upon in the pulpit, they are usually treated of in such a slight, superficial manner, that none can be profited thereby; and, if treated of more fully, it is in direct opposition to the received reformation doctrines. It is not my intention fully to discuss and prove these doctrines here; (that would take up too much room and time to be consistent with my present design) but only so far as appears necessary, to shew the present opposition made to them by our clergy in the general tenor of their preaching.

And First; The divinity of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is a truth so great and so very essential, that the whole of man's redemption rests upon it. Let but this truth be denied, and all our hopes

hopes of salvation from the wrath and curse of God must entirely vanish. The task was too arduous for any creature to undertake: and if he be not VERY GOD, he must be a creature, although of the highest order of created beings. Yet how many Arians and Socinians have we amongst our clergy? The former of which make him the absurd monster, a *created God*, the latter debase him to a mere creature. Others there are who will deign to compliment him with the title of GOD, yet depreciate his work in such a manner, as to leave no room to doubt what kind of a God they suppose him to be; even such a one as themselves. Others again will acknowledge that there was something of divinity stamped upon all that he said and did when upon earth; that he was the great exemplar to mankind; and that if we regard his precepts and instructions for our moral conduct, and copy after his life as the divine rule, we need not fear of attaining to a blissful immortality. Thus making him no more than a mere teacher of ethics: a more refined system indeed than was ever taught before, they will acknowledge his to be.

Of this great, fundamental truth our orthodox church speaks thus, in her *second article*: “ The
 “ Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten
 “ from everlasting of the Father, is, the VERY
 “ and ETERNAL GOD, of one substance with
 “ the Father.”

In the *communion collect for Trinity-sunday*, her members are taught to say ; “ that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the glory of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, *without any difference or inequality.*” And the doctrine is so fully and strongly asserted in the *athanasian creed*, that it is needless to produce any more passages from our church’s service, to prove that she holds it as a most essential article of the Christian faith. Neither is the scripture at all sparing in its proofs of this momentous truth. The prophets abound with them. Isaiah, when he had a vision of the transcendent glory, majesty, and holiness of God, as mentioned in the sixth chapter of his prophecy ; where he says, *he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple ; spake of Christ, as is asserted in the new testament, where this passage is referred to, and applied particularly to him, St. John xii. 41.* And the same prophet, speaking of Christ’s coming in the flesh, says, *he shall be called, THE MIGHTY GOD.* The prophet Zechariah introduces the Father speaking to the sword of his vengeance, and saying, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is MY FELLOW.*” We know against whom the sword did awake ; and that no creature can be called God’s fellow or equal. In the new testament we find Christ repeatedly asserting his divinity, assuming all the attributes

attributes of the deity, and claiming, as his right, divine honours and adoration equal with the Father ; and he refers to his miracles as incontestible proofs thereof. St. John, in the first chapter of his gospel, says, *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the WORD was GOD. All things were made by him,* he adds ; therefore he could not be made himself. The works of creation, of preservation, and of redemption, are ascribed to him : all which are sufficient proofs that he must be really and truly God.

This truth is not so frequently nor so daringly denied, it must be confessed, as some others : yet I appeal to the consciences of many of our clergy, whether the reason why they scruple to speak out on this head, and to give Christ his due honours, is not because they do not firmly believe it in their hearts ? With respect to people in general, they are almost utter strangers to this truth, hearing so little of it from the pulpit : and if they are spoke to about it, or hear any one extol Christ, in his offices, his attributes, and his finished work of redemption ; their reply immediately is, “ Why you rob the Father of his “ honour, by saying so much of Jesus Christ ; ” although our Lord himself has obviated this weak objection, by saying, *I and my Father are one ; and they that honour me, honour my Father also.*

Secondly, The fall of Man, or original sin.

A truth this which has been much controverted of late; and, if not totally denied, yet it has been represented by many in such a light, as to give us reason to doubt whether they believe that any depravity or guilt of the human nature is derived from our first parents down to us, or not. For we hear little else from our pulpits, than that man, in his present state, is a very excellent and lovely creature, of noble passions, of fine exalted rational faculties: his *dignity* and *moral rectitude*, are themes on which many elaborate and eloquent discourses have been delivered by our modern divines; in a manner, which (to do them justice) would have done honour to the stage. We are told indeed, that man is not in all respects *now* as he was at first created; for God created him upright, but he hath sought out many inventions: but still the foundation is the same. His frame and constitution, his moral powers and rational faculties continue the same; only he is apt now and then, by the prevalence of example and the power of temptation, to deviate a little from the paths of virtue and uprightness, and to contract some bad habits; which, if continued in, debase his nature for a time; but this implies not any depravity of nature: for when he recovers himself from any such failings or indiscretions, by attending to the faithful monitor within; when reason, immortal reason! reassumes her wonted seat, and controuls

controuls the lower passions of the soul, which are sometimes wrongly biaſſed; when he again ſubmits to her wiſe dictates, bows to her gentle ſceptre, and is guided by her light divine; he riſes gloriouſly from his fall, aſſerts his native dignity, and proves his divine original. We are alſo told that man is naturally a very ſocial creature; with ſuch diſpoſitions as are ever prompting him to commiſerate the diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures, and to ſtretch out his friendly hand to adminiſter relief: that his benevolence is ſo extenſive, that, like the ſun, it ſhines with a benign influence on all around him; yea, that he grasps the whole creation in his affectionate embraces: that he cannot hate, envy, or injure any one, without doing violence to his nature, which is ever impelling him to every ſocial and friendly action, and exciting him to rejoice at the proſperity of others. And with reſpect to the *Supreme Being*, his almighty creator and benefactor; reflecting on the many favours he has conferred on him, and the innumerable obligations he lies under to him, he cannot but love, adore, and ſerve him, as naturally as he breathes.

Thus is human nature at preſent delineated: ſo very averſe is man to acknowledge a truth, which pours contempt on his boaſted *dignity*, and turns it into *ſhame*: although he need but open his eyes and look around him in the world, to be ſtruck with proofs thereof, innumerable as they
are

are lamentable: where the streams demonstrate beyond all dispute, how impure the fountain is from whence they flow. And from the foregoing view of our nature a candid, unprejudiced person may be led to ask; "If we are by nature so very good, and (except a few who unwisely run to some excess) so very lovely in the eyes of God, what need have we of a Saviour? What occasion was there for our adorable redeemer to suffer, bleed, and die?"—Indeed I freely confess it is not in my power to answer the question. The very idea of mercy must respect some kind of misery; and redemption relates to slavery or bondage. Were this indeed the case with man, he would never seek for a Saviour, nor be thankful to God for one. And this accounts for man's aversion to, and rejection of the mercy that is tendered to him in the gospel. Flattering himself that he is well, he enquires not after a physician: for the *whole* need him not: the *sick* only desire him, and know how to prize him when they have received a cure.

But let us see whether our church does not give us another view and description of our nature than that just mentioned. In her *ninth article* she declares, "that original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians (*and moderns*) vainly talk; but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby
" man

“ man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is, of his own nature, inclined to evil. And therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.” We are instructed to preserve an abiding sense of this corruption of our nature, and to acknowledge it every time we approach God in public worship, in these expressions. “ We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep”—“ there is no health in us”—“ we are tied and bound with the chain of our sins.”

Man’s utter helplessness is also declared in the *tenth article*. “ The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God.” Again, “ Almighty God, who see’st that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.” And the whole of our church service proceeds upon this truth, and breathes throughout the same humble, self-abasing spirit.

And well she might, when the scripture describes man by nature in the same fallen, lost, depraved, corrupted, helpless state and condition in the strongest terms. A few passages might suffice to establish this truth, and to prove it to be entirely scriptural. “ *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek after God:*

but

but they are all gone out of the way ; they are altogether become abominable ; there is none that doeth good, no not one—God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually—I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me—the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked—out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies—we are all by nature the children of wrath—and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins—the carnal mind is enmity against God—And if any doubt whether the scripture concludeth all (every child of Adam) under sin ; or represents all to be in a lost, depraved state by nature, let him read the three first chapters of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans ; where he will find such proofs thereof, that if he admits of the authority of scripture, and will abide by its determination, he must be fully convinced that none is exempted from this original corruption of our nature : for the apostle cites some of the above passages, which were spoken of particular people at different times, and applies them to all mankind indefinitely.

And if this depravity were not spread through every faculty of soul and body, men could not act so absurdly as to deny, or endeavour to persuade themselves or others, that man is not so corrupt as our church and the scriptures describe him ;
since

since every day, yea, every hour affords to all whose eyes are open, such incontestible proofs of it. Else, whence proceeds the torrent of wickedness that flows around us?

Thirdly, Justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness.

This important doctrine is esteemed the true criterion whereby to judge of any church, whether it be a *gospel, protestant, reformed* church, or not. Ours indeed makes her boast in her possession of this grand article; which distinguishes her from the popish party and every other human system of divinity; being founded upon the everlasting atonement and perfect righteousness of the *God-man*, Christ Jesus; who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; and who magnified the law and made it honourable: in consequence of which, God can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. Mercy flowing down to sinful, miserable man in such a channel must, one would think, be very acceptable to all: and one would imagine, none would refuse that, without which they must be for ever miserable, only because it comes to them *freely, without money and without price*. But so it is, that notwithstanding God has vouchsafed to reveal his will concerning his mercy; that it may be obtained in this way and in no other; even by faith; which as a hand, receives it as a free gift; yet few, very few are brought down to these terms. If they

see any need of it; they want to purchase it: for not admitting the doctrine of original sin and the corruption of their nature, in the light the scriptures hold it forth; they fondly imagine they are rich enough in virtue and good works to atone for their sins and procure the favour of God: especially since God is become reconcileable by the death of Christ; having (say they) on account thereof abated the rigour of his law, and proposed such mild terms to us; that now, if we do all that lies in our power, and perform sincere obedience to his commands, he will forgive us our sins and reward us with eternal life. Hence it is that instead of our hearing this fundamental doctrine preached in our churches, and proclaimed, as it ought to be, upon the house-tops; we hear it rather exploded as a most absurd notion and quite irrational; to suppose that God can accept us, either without any regard to our goodness, or before we have done any good to recommend us to his favour: or that he will accept us wholly on account of what another has done; and upon the easy terms of believing too: this they can by no means admit of. But we are exhorted and pressed to *live moral lives*, and to *do good works*; and then we need not fear of obtaining the mercy of God, and of being happy with him hereafter.

This is the general strain in which we are addressed from the pulpit by our modern divines; notwithstanding

notwithstanding the church, of which they profess themselves to be ministers, asserts plainly in her *eleventh article*; “ That we are accounted
 “ righteous before God, *only* for the merit of our
 “ Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and
 “ not for our own works or deservings. Where-
 “ fore that we are justified by *faith only* is a most
 “ wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort,
 “ as more largely is expressed in the homily of
 “ justification.” And to shew the insufficiency
 of our own *good works* (as they are called) for
 this great end, in her *thirteenth article* she speaks
 thus: “ Works done before the grace of Christ
 “ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant
 “ to God—yea, rather for that they are not done
 “ as God hath willed and commanded them to
 “ be done, we doubt not but they have the na-
 “ ture of sin”—Few, I think, will venture to as-
 sert, that *sinful works* have any merit in them.
 These articles are pretty full to the purpose, but
 I shall subjoin a passage from the *Homily on the*
Salvation of mankind by only Christ our Saviour;
 which seems (if possible) to be still more strong
 and explicit—“ Because all men be sinners and
 “ offenders against God, and breakers of his law
 “ and commandments; therefore can no man by
 “ his own acts, works or deeds, SEEM THEY
 “ NEVER SO GOOD, be justified and made righteous
 “ before God: but every man of necessity is con-
 “ strained to seek for another righteousness of

“ justification—our justification doth come freely
 “ by the mere mercy of God.—So that Christ
 “ is now the righteousness of all them that truly
 “ do believe in him. *HE for them* paid their
 “ ransom by his death: *HE for them* fulfilled the
 “ law in his life.”—And as if our church intended
 we should always keep this truth in mind whenever we implore any blessing of the Almighty; almost all her prayers and collects end with—“ for
 “ the sake, or though the merits of Jesus Christ,
 “ &c.” to let us know that no temporal or spiritual
 blessing whatever can come to us in any other way,
 or upon any other account, than as the purchase
 of his blood, and through him, the mediator between
 God and man.

And of all the truths in the word of God there
 is none that shines with a more clear and transcendent
 lustre than this. From Genesis to the Revelations it is every
 where either expressly asserted, or plainly implied. God,
 knowing well the heart of man, how prone he is to arrogate
 some honour, and attribute some glory to himself from every
 thing that he does, repeatedly declares to the people of Israel
 (and tells them he would have them know it and consider it too,) that
 it was not for their sakes, or for their righteousness, that he
 did such wonderful things for them: for as the prophet declares,
all their righteousnesses (and ours too) were but as filthy rags. This great truth was
 taught of old in the whole mosaick
 oeconomy;

economy: all the sacrifices and washings, and the other ceremonies and services of the tabernacle and temple centered in it: as the epistle to the Hebrews abundantly shews. All pointing to, and terminating in, the great antitype, *Christ Jesus*. By faith in him, as revealed in the promises and typified in sacrifices, was Abraham justified of old: and in the same way must all be justified to the end of the world: for there is but one faith, and one Christ the object of that faith. The new testament is so full of this doctrine that it is to be found in almost every page. A few scriptures which are full to the point may suffice. We are justified by faith only—*A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law—that we might be justified by faith—being justified by faith—the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace—All that believe are justified from all things—not by the works of the law: by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified—not of works lest any man should boast—that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident—as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse—but by CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED: God imputeth righteousness without works—by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous—he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him—not having*
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my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.

If these scriptures are not sufficient to convince a person, that a man is justified by *faith alone* through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, without any works of his own antecedent thereunto; I imagine that either he cannot allow of the authority of scripture to determine the point; or that if all the scriptures upon this head were adduced, they would prove insufficient to convince him. However I am persuaded that enough passages have been produced both from the scriptures and our church, to prove to any candid, unprejudiced person, that it is a doctrine asserted, maintained, and inculcated by both. And consequently all those ministers who either artfully endeavour to undermine the doctrine, or who openly and avowedly oppose it, are the greatest enemies to our church; and in effect do more towards subverting her constitution than all the emissaries of Rome, or the whole band of deists, atheists, and freethinkers, who are combined together to oppose all divine revelation. For like treacherous officers in a citadel who first corrupt the minds of the soldiers and then betray the place into the enemies hands: so those, being appointed to defend our church's doctrines, do, by their unfaithful conduct, more real injury to her cause than any outward force or opposition can.

Left

Lest I should be thought too prolix, I shall mention but one doctrine more, which at this day is denied, opposed, and treated as altogether visionary and enthusiastic : which is,

The operations and influences of the Spirit of God.—This is that truth, the denial of, and opposition to which, our land groans under the accumulated guilt of; far beyond any other in Christendom. So insolent and daring in impiety are we grown, that notwithstanding the judgments and threatenings denounced in scripture against this crime are so awful and alarming, as to make every one, who believes the word of God, to dread the thought of any guilt thereof being found upon him; yet it is made so light of, as that the bare mention of it is become the subject of the most prophane wit and banter. Although the whole work of man's conversion to God, in quickening, justifying, sanctifying, and making meet for glory, is ascribed to the agency of the Holy Spirit; yet are his operations upon sinners hearts stigmatized for the height of delusion, madness, and enthusiasm: thereby imputing to the power of the devil, what can be effected by the power of God alone. So near do the blasphemies of these times border upon those which are pronounced in scripture to be unpardonable, that it seems difficult to distinguish them. But this is not much to be wondered at in the generality of people, when ministers themselves
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set the example in the pulpit: yea, when they dare assert openly in print, that all such influences of the Spirit are now withdrawn since the establishment of Christianity in the world: and that now the light of reason is abundantly sufficient to enable us to understand the scriptures, and to support us in our religious perseverance; and that therefore it must certainly be a great mark of fanaticism to expect any divine communications; and highly presumptuous to imagine that the scriptures are so obscure as to need the further assistance of the Holy Spirit to explain them.

But let us attend to the voice of our church upon this point; perhaps her sentiments are somewhat different. If I mistake not, she delivers her sentiments, at least, in a different manner in the following passage, from the *Homily on reading the Scriptures*: “Man’s human and worldly wisdom or science is *not needful* to the understanding of scripture, but the REVELATION OF THE HOLY GHOST; who *inspireth* the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search therefore.” We are taught to pray for his gracious influence in almost innumerable places in her collects and liturgy; a few of which follow: “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit—send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity—send down upon our bishops and
“ curates

“ curates, &c. the healthful Spirit of thy grace
 “ —grant that we being regenerate, &c. may
 “ be daily renewed by thy Holy Spirit—take
 “ not thy Holy Spirit from us—the fellowship
 “ of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore”—

And this strain she breathes throughout; implying that whatever spiritual blessings are conveyed to the souls of men, the Holy Spirit is the only agent thereof.

The Holy Spirit and his gracious influences were the grand promise of the new testament, which was often foretold in the old also. And notwithstanding there are some promises and predictions in the old testament, which had a peculiar reference to, and completion in the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit on the day of pentecost; yet there are others also which have a reference to the dispensation of the gospel, from the time of our blessed Lord's ascension into heaven to the end of the world; in which the Spirit is promised in his ordinary operations; and which respect his dwelling in the hearts of God's people, as a privilege common to them all: as, *I will dwell in them and walk in them*—agreeably to which St. Paul tells the Corinthian converts, *that they were the temple of the Holy Ghost*. Nor does any soul belong to God according to the scriptures, but such as have the Spirit: for, *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his—no man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost—as many as are led by the Spirit of*
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God, they are the sons of God—the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; and maketh intercession for us—be filled with the Spirit—I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth—grieve not the Holy Spirit, by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption. From all which (and innumerable other passages that might be cited) it is abundantly evident, that the Spirit of God is the beginner, the carrier on, and finisher of the whole work of grace in every soul that is saved. He awakens them to a sense of their guilt and danger by nature, and enlightens them to see their fallen, depraved state: he shews them the sufficiency of Christ to save them from the wrath of God which hangs over them, in having become their substitute and surety: he enables them to believe on him to the justification of their persons; and by his continual influences upon their hearts, purifies them and conforms them to his image: he supports them in their pilgrimage through this world under all the trials, temptations, crosses, afflictions, and troubles with which they are exercised, seals them to the day of redemption, and makes them meet for glory. All these privileges and blessings are the effects of the operations of the Spirit of God; and communicated by him alone. This is the doctrine of scripture and of our church: and can ministers, who ought to guard and defend our church's doctrines as her choicest

choicest treasure, be esteemed her friends; if, instead of defending them, they deny and oppose them? Rather, are they not her greatest enemies?

To avoid prolixity, I have not adduced so many proofs of the foregoing doctrines, as I might have done, from the scriptures and our church: but I trust enough have been produced to prove that they are indisputably the doctrines of both, to the satisfaction of any that allow of the authority of either. Perhaps it was expected that I should have quoted and referred to the works of some of our divines, since I have so freely charged them with the denial of these doctrines, in order to support the charge: but that would have been a very invidious task, as it would make the charge more personal: and I doubt not but my trouble therein is superseded, in a great measure, by a conviction in the consciences of those that are guilty thereof by the bare mention of it. As many of them must be conscious of their having denied as peremptorily, and used more virulent expressions against, these doctrines and the preachers of them, than what I have laid to their charge.

It may not be improper nor unreasonable here to give a word or two of answer to some of the most general and popular objections which are made to these doctrines. For object men will; and indeed they would want a scripture-mark of their authenticity, and give great room for sus-

picion that they were not doctrines according to godliness, if the world in general, as well as those who content themselves with a form of godliness without the power thereof, did not object and fight against them. If we reflect a moment on the cause of the objections which are raised against all inward religion, that it is owing to a rooted enmity in the heart of every natural man against God and godliness; we need not be surprized that men, who are in the full career of indulging their lusts and passions, who are drowned in sensuality, and lost to all serious reflection by a round of dissipating amusements, should raise objections against a religion, which, if once received in the love and power of it, must necessarily deprive them of those things, wherein they at present think their chief happiness consists; even, the full gratification of every desire they find themselves possessed of. And from the same cause proceed all the objections which ever were or can be raised by any man against the doctrines of the gospel; and all the opposition to them also, which we find in the world; only with this difference, that the degrees thereof depend upon the measure of anxiety and solicitude with which they are pursuing the enjoyments of this world. As inward religion strikes at the root of that happiness which nature seeks; no sooner does the natural man hear these truths pressed upon him, but the enmity of his heart is stirred up against them.

And

And herein do the more sober part of mankind, who, through the power of education and the fear of shame, are restrained from such criminal indulgencies, agree with the sensualists, and employ all their reason, wisdom, and talents, in endeavouring to bring into discredit all vital religion. In their calm and sober moments both parties agree that religion is right, so long as the profession of it can be attended with ease and honour; and if it admit of a decent indulgence of the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. But let us hear what reason there is in the common objections, and whether they are consistent with what the members of our church profess to believe.

And first; it is objected against these doctrines, "that they are *new* and *strange*."

With great readiness, but with equal concern, I subscribe to the truth and reasonableness of this objection. *New!* indeed they are to most of the people: but why are they so?—Is it not because they are seldom heard from our pulpits? In most of them they are scarcely ever mentioned, except it be with some mark of contempt: and when by any particular providence the people hear those truths delivered with any suitable warmth and earnestness, in their own parish-churches, or (through curiosity) out of them; no wonder that they cry, "This is a new and strange doctrine we have heard to day;" when they have been used from the beginning of the year to the end to hear
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little else but lectures upon *dry morality*; except when they are cautioned against listening to the delusions that are abroad in the world, and the deceivers of the day; which (they are told) will make them more fit for bedlam than society, if they regard them. That these doctrines are not *new* to our church, but are essential to her constitution as a protestant church, has, I think, been sufficiently shewn. Therefore it is owing to the negligence of her ministers in preaching them, that they appear *new* to the people; and not to any *novelty* in the doctrines themselves.

A second objection is, "That they are *enthusiastic*; and that those who hold them *pretend to impulses and feelings*; which is a true mark of *fanaticism*, it being inconsistent with reason."—All who make their religion to consist in a round of duties, as well as those who set up the dim light of unassisted reason to judge of spiritual things by, have entered their protest against every thing that may be *felt* in religion. Nicodemus of old, when our Lord talked with him about spiritual things, which his reason could not comprehend, replied with a modest surprize; "How can these things be?"—Our modern Nicodemites, destitute of the modesty which he possessed, with an air of haughtiness, self-confidence, and self-sufficiency, in direct contradiction to the express declarations of scripture, exclaim, "these things *are not so*."—And why? Because they have never experienced
any

any thing like it themselves. What excellent advocates these are for religion! and what a fine encomium they thereby pass upon it! when they deny that there is any thing to be *felt* in it. Is it to be wondered at, that so few are zealous in its cause, when they are required to deny themselves many gratifications of sense, and, it seems, they are to have nothing in return? Poor encouragement this! for a person immersed in sensuality to embrace it: hardly will he be persuaded to give up a certain happiness (poor as it is) for one that is only in idea. Our religion promises its votaries, the most permanent and substantial happiness; not only hereafter, but a present enjoyment of it, in such a degree and measure, as to be far superior to any that this world affords. It promises PEACE, JOY, LOVE; CONSOLATION and COMFORT under afflictions and outward distresses. And can a man have these blessings and yet *feel* nothing of them? Who is the *enthusiast* then? He who says he can feel peace, joy, &c. when he possesses them; or he who says he can not? I should esteem that man a *perfect enthusiast* who should tell me that he was in possession of a real happiness, superior to any that the carnal delights of sense afford; yet he had no *sense* or *feeling* of it. The plain question is this—"Whether a man knows "when he is miserable and when he is happy?"—Whether a person, who has been in great distress of mind from an apprehension of the wrath of
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an angry God, and is delivered from it, can be sensible of the alteration of his state? Or whether he, who once hated God, his word, his ordinances, his laws, and his people, being brought to love him and delight in him, can be sensible of the change wrought in him thereby? What an insult is it offering to a man's understanding, to tell him he cannot be sensible of any of these things?

Weak, exceeding weak, is the objection against these truths, which is founded upon their being *inconsistent with reason*. Men should be well acquainted, I think, with all the operations in nature, and be able to give a very satisfactory account of the manner of the existence of every object around them, and a full demonstrative proof, that all the wonders of the creation are fathomable and explicable by the line and compass of man's reason; before they reject any truth mentioned in the scriptures, only because they cannot comprehend, "how it can be." There is a professed ignorance in all men with regard to the former, and yet notwithstanding they will dare to reject the latter upon account of the *mysteriousness* of them. Our Lord himself, in condescension to our weak, finite capacities, has compared the operations of the Spirit upon the souls of men to those of the wind: he tells us, *we hear the sound thereof* (we are sensible of its effects;) *but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth*: so is every one (he adds) *that is born of the Spirit*.

Can

Can any one explain how the wind and sun concur in their operations and influences in carrying on the wonders of vegetation? That it is so we are certain: we see it, and admit it, although we cannot explain the *manner how* it is done. And cannot God, who created the soul of man, act upon it by his Spirit, (although it be in a way unaccountable to us) as well as the sun in the heavens act upon this dull inanimate earth? Men who make their own benighted reason the sole arbitress in these matters, will ever be stumbling upon some difficulty or other. For until reason be brought to submit to revelation, and to act in subordination to it, she is a mere *ignis fatuus*; a very unsafe guide. Nor does revelation any more destroy the faculty of reason, than light destroys the organ of sight. St. Paul, who was a competent judge in this matter, has informed us of the true reason why men object against these things: *The natural man, says he, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither CAN he know them because they are spiritually discerned.*

Another objection, which is very gravely, and sometimes very warmly advanced, is, “That to
 “ preach salvation by *faith alone* in the *imputed*
 “ *righteousness of Christ*, is to preach against good
 “ works; at least, it does not sufficiently secure
 “ the interests of morality.—In this humane and
 very charitable age, and especially in this king-
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dom, where our cities are environed with sumptuous hospitals for the relief of the afflicted, distressed, and miserable; which serve as so many monuments of, and proclaim aloud to all, the humanity, compassion, and charitableness of the inhabitants: yea, when we can boast of such signal acts of extensive beneficence, whereby the natives of foreign countries can testify, with the warmest sense of gratitude, to the compassion and munificence of the people of this land: I say, when this age is thus distinguished by the many shining works of mercy and compassion, of which it can boast; surely a person ought to be very cautious how he treads upon such forbidden ground, as to discourage, even in appearance only, the practice of good works, or to speak slightly of them. For my own part, if those doctrines before-mentioned, are justly chargeable with having any such tendency, and it can be made appear so; I would immediately renounce them, as doctrines not of God: yea, if it cannot be made appear, that they furnish a man with the noblest and most disinterested motives, springing from the most coercive principle, for the practice of all social duties and moral virtue, I desire to be stigmatized for an enemy to virtue and all good works. But surely those who make this objection, and bring against these doctrines this unjust charge, must be utter strangers to them in their hearts, if not in their heads.

Indeed

Indeed the objection is a right conclusion from such premises as these; "that there is nothing "to be *felt* in religion."

I presume it will be readily granted me, that LOVE is the most active, as well as the most disinterested principle that man can act from: and also, that when LOVE is kept alive and flaming in the heart of a man by a grateful sense of innumerable blessings and benefits received, it actuates him so powerfully, that he readily and chearfully performs every act of obedience required by the object of his love; he even rejoices at every opportunity that offers of testifying his gratitude, and detests the very thought of doing any thing that might give offence.

But can any system of ethics furnish a man with this principle? Can the *amiableness of virtue* create it in him? Or can the *fear of punishment* and *hope of reward* produce it?—No, nothing but the gospel can. All real, genuine good works, all sound morality, flow from the principle of LOVE TO GOD, which is the fruit of a saving faith in Jesus Christ, and a discovery of the love of God towards us in him; for *we love him because he first loved us*: and it implies in the very nature of the thing, that we must have some persuasion or consciousness of this love of God towards us, before we can love him; which is only the effect of it. When, therefore, we receive the grace of God as a free gift, and as the purchase of Christ's blood; when we are par-

done, justified, adopted into the family of God, and have his love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; then, and not till then, are we thoroughly furnished with right principles for true, acceptable obedience. Then the true believer rejoices to do the will of God; *for he delights in his law after the inward man*, and abhors all manner of sin. And let any man of candour judge, whether, if a person thinks he has purchased or merited the love and favour of another by his good offices, he can love him in return with the same ardor of affection, as if he were conscious of his own unworthiness of that person's love; and yet he nevertheless had given him the most signal marks of his love towards him. Suppose, for instance, two men were convicted of high treason against their sovereign, and were waiting for the dreadful hour when they were to receive condign punishment for their crime: suppose his majesty, out of his mere free-grace, was pleased to extend his mercy towards them both, and accordingly dispatched a messenger with their free pardon to the prison in which they lay: one of them, we will imagine, receives most cordially and thankfully the welcome news, and transported with a sense of the royal clemency, burns with gratitude towards his sovereign. The other, vainly imagining the king had heard of his *good offices and kindness* towards his fellow-prisoners, receives the pardon indeed—but receives it, as what *his*

own

own merit had moved the king to bestow upon him. Which of these two now is likely to be the most dutiful and obedient subject, and to love the king the most?—

But unluckily for the espousers of this objection it is usually answered by the same people that make it. For we hear them continually finding fault with the *strictness* and *preciseness* of the lives of the advocates for those doctrines. And why are the preachers of them so often called upon to preach *charity-sermons*, if they decry the practice of good works? But Wisdom is justified of her children; and even her enemies sometimes, very unwittingly, bear their testimony to them also. Far, very far, are these ministers from decrying the *practice* of good works: but they exclaim most vehemently against their being *trusted in*, as if they merited any thing at the hands of God: and well they might, for they are too jealous of their master's honour, to suffer his crown to be plucked from his royal head, and put upon the head of a creature; which all in effect do, who attribute any thing of merit to their works in the sight of God. Why then, say these objectors, "You do deny the use, and do not provide for the practice of them."—Neither the one nor the other. The use of them is great; their end being to glorify God, and to benefit mankind: and the motives to the practice of them are, *gratitude* and *love* to God, springing from

from *faith* in Jesus Christ, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.* Therefore the first and chief work of these ministers is, to labour to bring the people acquainted with their true state by nature; and to direct them to Jesus Christ, that they may be grafted into him by a vital faith; in whom alone they can find grace and strength to enable them to perform any acceptable obedience.

I know St. James is often quoted in proof of the necessity of good works to our justification; and, what is worse, (most sorely against his will) he is brought forth to confront his brother Paul. But a little attention to the different subjects they are writing on, would discover a perfect harmony between them. St. James speaks not of the justification of our persons in the sight of God, but of our faith before men; and says, for a man to pretend to a faith which can save him *before God*, and that faith produces no fruit *before men*, he deceives himself. St. Paul, on the other hand, says we are justified in the sight of God by faith alone; but it is such a faith as works by love, and is productive of good works; otherwise it is not a true justifying faith. So far are these apostles from clashing with one another, that they both assert and maintain the same thing, both pleading for an active, lively faith.

Another

Another passage produced from scripture, in support of the merit of good works, is that in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew ; where our Lord himself, in describing the process of the last judgment, recites the good works of the faithful to their everlasting honour before men and angels ; and even (say those merit-mongers) attributes to these their salvation, and rewards them with eternal happiness upon account thereof ; by saying, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, &c.—for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, &c. &c.*—But it does not appear from hence that our Saviour mentions these works of theirs as any procuring cause, of their being blessed of his Father, or of their right and title to eternal life : he only *characterizes* them by them ; as we would refer a person to the fruit to prove that a tree is alive and good. He calls them *blessed of his Father*, and then points to the fruits or effects of their being so ; as a demonstrative proof. And so little did they trust to, or depend upon what they had done, that they are represented as having forgotten it all : *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, &c. &c.* And there is one particular mentioned in the passage, which the advocates for the merit of works would do well to consider a little, before they produce it in support of their favourite tenet : which is this, namely ; that our Lord does not mention one act of kindness done to any but those that were his brethren, which he
accepts

accepts as done to himself. From whence I infer that they must have been first united to Christ, and did all from a principle of love to him; and to them as brethren, and in the name of disciples: consequently all the most splendid works that are not done in faith, from the same motives, and directed to the same end, cannot be such as are here mentioned: and it further implies, that they must have been pardoned and their persons accepted, before their works could possibly be so.

What are all the refined, exalted *sentiments of morality and virtue*! so much extolled in the world? What is that *disinterestedness*, and *universal benevolence*! which the deistical gentlemen make their boast of? What, the *great patriotism*! the *noble principles of honour*! which the great amuse us with the talk of?—What are any or all of these, compared with the motives and principles for the practice of morality and virtue, with which the gospel furnishes a man? Are they not mere empty boast, and lighter than vanity itself? The *former* kind, (contrary to what it pretends to) contracts and confines the heart—the *latter* enlarges, dilates, and expands it. SELF, with the *one*, is the great first cause of all that is done; all proceeds from, all terminates in SELF—the *other*, annihilates self, and sacrifices all its own interests, that stand in the way of the glory of God and the good of mankind: both which it always
has

has ultimately in view. The fruit which springs from *that*, is like the apples said to grow in Sodom; fair indeed to the eye, but within, nothing but dust or rottenness—what *this* produces is profitable to its owner and to mankind, and is acceptable to God. And (what is the peculiar distinguishing characteristic) while the *first* prompts a man to hate his enemies; to resent and seek revenge for injuries; and, for a trifling, or supposed offence, to bathe his sword in the heart's blood of the aggressor—the *last* prompts a man to love his most implacable foes; to forgive and pass by, with a noble spirit, all insults and injuries of a trivial nature; and to seek no other revenge or recompence for greater offences, than to justify himself or his conduct, and to *overcome the evil with good*: and if the crime committed against him be such as the law condemns; he, with reluctance, as a duty he owes to his country, gives him up into the hands of justice; yet forgives, and prays for him.

Nothing but this *mighty working* of the LOVE OF GOD, can take the love of sin out of the heart, and create a detestation of it there, as most loathsome and offensive to his purity and holiness. Therefore it is a *vile insinuation* concerning the doctrines of free-grace; “that they lead to licentiousness:” and a *most slanderous report* against the preachers thereof, that they ever imply or say;

“let us do evil that good may come”—which stirred up such a holy indignation in the great apostle, Paul; that knowing the malicious enmity of heart from whence it proceeded, and that it could be suggested by none but the infernal spirit; he does not stop to refute the cursed thought with any arguments, but assuming a proper authority in his master’s cause, he thunders out an anathema against the propagators of it, with an awful emphasis—“whose damnation is just”—Let all such *bear and tremble*.

I am sorry, *my Lords and reverend Sirs*, that I have detained you so long in my reply to this objection: but it appearing to me to be the most plausible one, and the principle upon which it proceeds, to be founded in utter ignorance of the true state of the case; I flatter myself I shall be the more readily excused for having been pretty full in my answer to it. And I will beg leave to close my answer to it with a passage from the sacred word: which, I think, is very pertinent to the point, and expresses the whole of man’s salvation by grace in so short a compass, that it may be called, “the gospel in epitome.”

The passage referred to is in the third chapter of the epistle to Titus, verse the third and following; which I shall put down at length, and make no comment on the words, because they express so clearly; (1) what all men are by nature;
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(2) how they are made partakers of grace and salvation; and (3) the fruits and effects consequent thereupon.—*We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God, might be CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

It is also said; “ that the preachers of these “ doctrines drive people to despair; and are preachers of damnation”—It is really surprizing to see what shifts men are sometimes put to when they endeavour to defend a bad cause; which, in order to serve some bye-ends, or to justify their own conduct, they have espoused. They will raise a dust before the eyes of others, to keep them from the true knowledge of that which would discover their dishonesty: and this they do,

by representing the knowledge of it as productive of the most horrid and dreadful consequences; thereby to prejudice their minds against it, and to prevent their enquiry into the matter.

As to the former part of this objection, viz. "that these preachers drive people to despair:" there are indeed two kinds of despair which the true ministers of the gospel are ever labouring to bring their hearers into: the first is, A DESPAIR *of ever being saved IN their sins*; the other, A DESPAIR *of being saved by their own strength*; by any thing they have done or can do. And these they endeavour to affect, by convincing them of their natural impotence; by shewing them the imminent danger they are in of being damned on account of their sins, original and actual; and by setting before them the terrors of the Lord; which they commonly do in the very words of scripture. Therefore, if the consequence were such, that any were really driven to black despair, so as to lay violent hands on themselves; these ministers are not justly chargeable with being the cause thereof; the charge falls upon the word of God. But the truth is this; as soon as a person is made sensible of his sinful, miserable state by nature, and has lost all relish for his former sinful enjoyments; and begins to cry out, "what must I do to be saved:" immediately the world says, he is *mad*, or *in despair*: because he

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is in earnest about the salvation of his soul, pours contempt upon the pleasures of the world, and refuses to run to the same excess of riot as before. This kind of despair I wish to see more instances of daily; because it is the truest mark that *mad-men* (in God's esteem) are *coming to themselves*; and indicates their being in the right way to obtain eternal life.

With respect to the latter part of the charge against the preachers of the gospel, viz. "that they are preachers of damnation:" this they leave for the *moral, legal preachers* to do: for their general strain of, DO—DO— has a direct tendency to drive people to despair, who are in any measure awakened; and is in effect preaching of damnation: for the task which they have assigned them, in order to obtain their salvation, is what they never can perform; and therefore must of necessity despair of God's mercy in that way: and as the law to which they are sent leaves all under the curse, who do not keep it perfectly and invariably; such ministers as address their auditories in this strain, may very justly be called, *preachers of damnation*.

The evangelical preachers act in a far different manner. When they, through the blessing of God upon their ministry, have convinced men of their guilt and danger, and they are truly pricked in their heart; they leave them not in this their wounded

wounded condition, but apply the healing balm of Christ's atoning blood, by preaching a free and full salvation from the curse of the broken law, through what he has done and suffered for them: which relieves them from their distress of soul, and prevents them from falling into despair. Nor can these ministers be justly charged with preaching damnation to the people; any more than for a man, who saw another running furiously along, to tell him a pit was before him, into which he was in danger of falling and of losing his life; would be to send him thither: although he told him of a way to avoid it. So, to warn sinners of their danger, and to admonish them to escape it, at the same time pointing out the only way; cannot surely, with any colour of reason, be said, to be *sending people to hell*. Whereas to call upon such as are convinced of their weakness and helplessness, to a strict observance of the moral law, as a condition of their salvation; is as great a mockery, as to call to a man, lying in extreme pain and misery with all his joints dislocated, and to bid him get up and run a race, as a condition of his being made sound and whole.

And let none imagine that to speak thus of the insufficiency of the moral law to save us, is to derogate in the least from its honour or usefulness. It is a transcript of the divine mind and will; it indicates

indicates the holiness and purity of all the perfections of JEHOVAH; and it is a perfect rule of action to all his intelligent creatures. Yet can no man recover the favour of God, or obtain life, by keeping it; it being become weak for that end through the fall; *for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.* “Wherefore then serveth the law?”

—*It was added because of transgressions*; replies the apostle to this question: and its use in the plan of man’s redemption is, *to convince of sin*—to discover to a man the depravity of his nature and the sinfulness of his life; it is *a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer*; and it is *the way*, in which he is to walk with God after he is reconciled to him. And herein alone is the law made truly honourable, and its use established: its sanctions having taken place upon, and its precepts having been perfectly obeyed by, the GOD-MAN, Christ Jesus. But every other way of honouring it, is casting only the highest indignity both upon the law and the law-giver.

I trust I have made it appear that these doctrines which are commonly charged with *novelty, enthusiasm, and madness*; and as *tending to licentiousness, and driving people to despair and damnation*, are the very doctrines of the reformation, and perfectly consistent with the scriptures: and likewise, that
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those which are substituted in their stead, by the ministers who reject them, are of a direct contrary nature, and quite repugnant to the word of God.

And now, *my Lords and reverend Gentlemen*; this being a true state of the case, is it at all to be wondered at, that any of the people, when they cannot hear those doctrines of the reformation (which they know by happy experience to be *the power of God unto salvation*) in their own parish churches, will act so irregularly, as to go elsewhere to hear them? or that those ministers who know the obligation they lie under to preach the gospel, from their oaths and subscriptions, and from an awful sense of the importance of the dispensation committed to them, of which they must one day give a strict account; that these, when denied the use of pulpits in the church, will not remain silent, but will preach the gospel where they can, rather than incur the guilt of souls being lost through their negligence, and those woes denounced against careless, slothful shepherds in the sacred word? Who are the true ministers of our church, those that make conscience of preaching her doctrines, or those that do not? And what effrontery must they have! who call themselves ministers, yet dare to stigmatize those who pay a proper regard to their oaths and subscriptions, and who are indefatigable in the
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work of the ministry, with the names of *enthusiasts*, *madmen*, and *enemies to the church*; when it is evident that they themselves are her enemies, by sapping her very foundations, and throwing wide the floodgates of error. Surely *my Lords*, &c. it cannot have come to your knowledge that there are such a number of undutiful, faithless sons in the very bosom of our church; or, one would imagine, they must have incurred your Lordships severest censure ere now. What must the common people think (who give themselves any concern or trouble about the matter) when they hear their ministers read our orthodox church service in the desk, and as soon as they get into the pulpit, condemn and inveigh against every fundamental truth, which they had just before been reading; as if they endeavoured to make a continual clashing between the desk and the pulpit? How can any who know the worth of their souls, and the great importance of their salvation, trust the care of them with those who act such a dishonest part?

Do not our present circumstances call aloud for redress? Are not all ranks and degrees of men amongst us (a very few only of each excepted) casting off all restraint, trampling upon all laws, human and divine, and rushing with the greatest impetuosity down the broad road to destruction? Live not men at present as if they were avowed

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atheists,

atheists, and as though there were no God to judge the earth? And since the means that have been used of late, to suppress the different kinds of wickedness which abound in our land, have proved so ineffectual, that the disease rages and grows worse, even under the physicians hands; should not some other remedy be tried? We have had MORALITY! MORALITY! preached up in our churches so long, till there is scarcely any morality left amongst us. Witness the abominations of the times. What scandalous immoralities are there practised in the face of the sun! What horrid prophaneness, impiety, and blasphemy abound in our land! What violence, oppression, and extortion walk our streets at noon day! And what scenes of lewdness, riot, and debauchery are there nightly transacted there! to the shame of this highly favoured land, which vainly boasts in the name of, Christian; in its liberties, its laws, and other peculiar privileges.—Would not many heathens blush for us, were they spectators of our horrid crimes?

And whence proceed all these abominations, and that spirit of licentiousness which every where prevails? What is the reason that vice and immorality, oppression, rapine, and injustice, rage so much amongst us? That our great people are intoxicated with a spirit of luxury and ambition; and our common people are mad after pleasures
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and diversions? That all, discontented in their stations, are quitting their own spheres, and rushing into those above them? That atheism and infidelity gain ground, and that free-thinkers scoff at all religion, and trample revelation under their unhallowed feet?—What is the cause of all this horrid train of evils, every where so justly and so loudly complained of, portending some dreadful storm ready to burst over this guilty land?—However strange and paradoxical it may seem, and however contrary to the prevailing opinion of the day, I dare be bold to affirm, that next to the corrupt fountain from whence all these streams of impurity flow; namely, the heart of man; “ it is owing to this *preaching of morality* in our churches, which for half a century “ has occupied the place of the gospel-doctrines “ of the reformation.”

Some perhaps may begin to suspect me to be a little turned in the head for my *strange, unwarrantable assertion*, as they may call it: but I dare not retract it: I will rather repeat it, in hopes that it will strike with conviction some that are guilty in the matter:—I say, it is owing, in a great measure, to our ministers substituting *lectures of morality*, in the stead of preaching *the gospel of Jesus Christ*, that so little morality is left, and that every species of wickedness is grown so rampant amongst us. For these moral harangues

upon the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice, together with all the specious arts of rhetoric, of moral suasion, of eloquence, and of oratory, which are practised by our *modern, modish* divines, in order to reclaim the abandoned, and to stimulate them to the practice of virtue; never did, and never will convert a sinner to God: having only a tendency to flatter mens pride, and to fill them with a vain imagination that they naturally possess some innate, inherent goodness; and that they not only have a power and ability to do what God's law requires of them; but that they can also merit by their goodness the favour of God and eternal happiness; and have a will likewise to turn to God when they please. All which being so directly opposite to the true nature and genius of the gospel, and so repugnant to the whole word of God; that, to vindicate his injured honour, in having the way of salvation, which he has appointed, rejected, and despised; he will certainly pour contempt on every other expedient, however plausible, that is set up in opposition to his.

And at present he lets us both see and feel the vanity and insufficiency of all other ways and methods of salvation, planned by the reason and wisdom of man: that they are not at all adequate to the end proposed: nor even sufficient to effect any kind of reformation. This is the irrefragable

ble argument God seems to be using with us at this day; to convince us of the depravity of our nature, which we are so averse to learn and confess, and of the dignity of which we so vainly boast? Does he not speak aloud by the voice of his providence, in suffering, in spite of all the human efforts that have been made, an inundation of all kinds of wickedness, scarcely heard of before, to overflow this land? And is not this the emphasis of his voice, and the purport of what he utters—"That since his gospel is rejected, and
 "the essential doctrines thereof despised, those
 "that have assumed the sacred office to minister
 "in holy things, shall labour in vain, and spend
 "their strength for nought: that they shall never
 "be able to restrain the fierce passions and
 "dissolute affections of men by all the efforts of
 "human strength and skill, or by all their studied,
 "elaborate, well-polished discourses in praise of
 "moral virtue."

These eloquent, moral harangues of our modern orators, for the composition of which they are much indebted to the heathen orators and philosophers of old, and for the manner of delivery of them, to the stage: although they are so much extolled at present, and esteemed to be (in conjunction with the stage) a battery of strength and force sufficient to demolish all the vices and follies of the age; yet in point of elegance of composition,

fition, and with respect to the effects produced by them upon the minds and hearts of men, in restraining them from immoralities and excesses ; they were far excelled by the orations of the heathens : notwithstanding those have the superior advantage of the light of revelation, besides the works of these to copy after. And the reason why our modern orators are less successful in their attempts than those of old, is obvious : for they, having no other light to guide them but the light of nature, of their depraved reason and blinded consciences, were wrought on by no other arguments, and actuated by no other motives, than what respected the fear of punishment and hope of applause or reward, with reference chiefly to this life : their notions of futurity being the most confused, precarious, and uncertain. Which arguments and motives however being strongly enforced, they often proved successful. But now, under the outward light of the gospel, wherein life and immortality are clearly revealed, and the mercy of God shines with a transcendently glorious lustre, the case is far different. Such arguments and motives as were used by them are now superseded, or rendered less available, by greater. But alas ! though we hear the mercy of God much extolled and spoken of in this our day, yet we hear not the gospel way of obtaining it declared. Instead of men being told they must implore it of

God

God as a free gift; they are instructed to do all the good they can, and then they may safely expect the mercy of God, in pardoning the few failings that they have been guilty of; and that he will reward their goodness with eternal happiness. This being the strain in which men are generally addressed from the pulpit, every one rating his own goodness and merit far above what they deserve; the general notion of *God's great mercifulness* serves only to encourage them in their career of indulging their sinful lusts and passions; upon a presumption that he who is *so merciful*, cannot be *so severe* as to damn them eternally for a few finite, small offences, which they might have been guilty of, in gratifying those passions which he has implanted within them: but rather, that he will give them time to repent and amend before they die; and so they shall obtain mercy for their offences, and be rewarded with eternal glory hereafter.

The ill effects of this *moral preaching* are discoverable, not only in the general indifference for religion which prevails amongst us, and the immoral lives of most professors; but also in the conduct of the ministers themselves: for how different is it from the self-denied conduct which our blessed Saviour and his apostles taught and practised? How conformed are they to the customs of the world?—In general, they are too
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polite and well-bred, to refuse to join in a party at the card-table; or to withstand the solicitations of the *beau monde*, to partake with them of the pleasures and amusements of the age. How anxious are they after the profits and preferments of the world? And how little attentive to, or solicitous to advance, their master's cause, or the spiritual interests of their respective flocks? Their *practice* but too plainly evinces the *unsoundness* of their *principles*. Were ministers duly impressed with a sense of the greatness and importance of the work of the ministry, and of the salvation of precious souls; they could not, I apprehend, relish so much the dissipating amusements and pleasures of sense; or give such countenance, as they usually do, to that *love of the world*, that *forgetfulness of God*, and *unconcern for eternity*, which every where prevail. The fear of men restrains them from acting faithfully to their souls in the pulpit, lest they should give offence; and out of it, their hopes and expectations of preferment make them very cautious how they run counter in their conduct to the dispositions and inclinations of those they are connected with, or have any dependance upon. And nothing, I am persuaded, encourages men to enjoy, with greater freedom, the pleasures of the world, than when they are countenanced in it by the example of a clergyman. Surely this conformity

to the world of the generality of the ministers of the gospel (nominally so at least) does more real injury to the cause of vital religion than all the opposition of her avowed enemies. It is the inconsistent conduct of the clergy that makes religion at so low an ebb, as it is at present; and which gives her adversaries so much advantage against her: for how just is the conclusion which they draw—"if there be any *reality* in religion, "and if it will enable a man to despise this world "and live above it, having his hopes and chief "desires fixed on a better; why, say they, do "not the clergy themselves, who are the teachers "of it, discover this in their own conduct? We "see they do not; therefore there can be no re- "ality in what they talk of." And hence the universal contempt of religion! The *rich* and *great*, conclude it to be only a necessary political scheme to keep vulgar minds in awe: the *wise* and *learned* of the world, that it is only a trade, or priestcraft, to fetter the free-born mind of man: and the *common people*, seeing all above them (who they think must know what is right) pay no regard to it, scorn also the restraint that it would put upon them.

These are the genuine fruits and natural consequences of our *moral preaching*, which is set up in opposition to the doctrines of the gospel. And for a proof of this assertion I appeal to facts, to experience, and the consciences of men; and let

these speak, whether those are not the sentiments they at present entertain; and let any one judge, if those fruits do not naturally spring from such corrupt principles. The name of *Christian* serves only to make men more careless and unconcerned about their souls except the principles of Christianity be received into, and become operative upon, their hearts. And there cannot be a more dangerous or destructive opinion, I presume, than that all who are born in a Christian country, and have been baptized, are *real Christians*: than which nothing can be more contrary to truth: for God knows that thousands in this kingdom are as far from being Christians, although they have been baptized and sometimes come to church, as the most savage, unenlightened hottentots. Therefore to address a whole congregation from the pulpit as all *true believers*, notwithstanding the lives of the greatest part of them give the lie to the minister, and not a tenth part of them, perhaps, knows what vital Christianity means; is a most dangerous error, and big with the most pernicious consequences. Children are undoubtedly born in this land with a nature which is as much estranged and alienated from God, and at enmity with him, as any that are born in Africa; and notwithstanding the great privileges and advantages of being born in a land of gospel light and liberty, (privileges which are indeed invaluable); yet they as much require a divine power to be exerted towards

wards them ere they commence true believers, as the others. Being by nature dead in trespasses and sins, they must be quickened and made alive by the Spirit of God, and be enabled *so* to believe in Jesus Christ, *as* to receive him for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. For what the apostle said of the Jews is true also of Christians, viz. "He is not a *Christian* which " is one outwardly, neither is that *baptism* which " is outward in the flesh; but he is a *Christian* " which is one inwardly, whose *baptism* is that of " the heart by the Spirit, &c."

Therefore, *my Lords and reverend Gentlemen*, when a torrent of wickedness is overflowing our land, the measure of our iniquity appears to be full, and we are ripe for destruction; when men are grown so hardened in their crimes, as to trample upon all authority, and laugh at all laws; when the Almighty, justly incensed by our provocations, awakes his anger, and gives us repeated indications of his divine displeasure; and when, notwithstanding this, men are grown so bold and insolent, as to set their mouths against the heavens, arraign the conduct of their judge, and impiously blaspheme the holy name whereby we are called—when this is the case with us; and RELIGION, abashed at the horrid sight, reclines her fainting head, no longer able to behold it—our last resource is, to call upon you, *O ye am-*

bassadors of the Lord! and to beseech you, by all that is honourable and important in your functions, by all your sacred ties and obligations to your Lord, by your love to your country and mankind, and by all that is dear and valuable to yourselves in time and eternity; to exert all your power, your influence and abilities, according to your respective stations in the church, in preaching, and causing to be preached, the everlasting gospel; as the only remedy for all our national evils; and thus to stem the torrent of infidelity and wickedness, and to save this sinking land from impending ruin.

As lovers of your country then, and as friends to mankind, would you have another scene of things take place? Would you see vice and immorality, oppression, rapine, and injustice suppressed amongst us?—**PREACH, and cause to be preached, THE GOSPEL.** Would you have the spirit of ambition, of luxury, and pleasure amongst high and low to cease, and people become contented in their stations?—**PREACH THE GOSPEL.** Would you have atheism and infidelity lose ground, and free-thinkers stoop to hear the voice of revelation?—**PREACH THE GOSPEL.** Would you have cursing, swearing, the prophanation of days and things sacred, and impieties of all kinds, turned into a pure language, the true worship of God, and a reverence for his holy name?—**PREACH**

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THE GOSPEL. And lastly, do you desire to see all divisions and separations from the established church decline; the further spreading of popery put a stop to, and our long deserted churches and chapels filled and crowded?—Let the doctrines, the *long neglected doctrines* of the reformation be POWERFULLY PREACHED in them; and all these happy and desirable changes would soon commence.

This is the sovereign, the only effectual remedy for all our complaints, national or private; the only antidote to the poison of our nature; and the only balm to heal all the maladies thereof, because it is the power of God unto salvation. In vain does the civil magistrate, with activity and vigilance, exert his utmost authority to put our wholesome laws in execution for the suppression of vice and wickedness; while the minister of the gospel, with a supine indifference, stands silent and inactive by. Success depends upon their joint efforts. In vain do we annually drag scores of our wretched criminals to the fatal tree; or waft in our ships hundreds more to foreign climes: though necessary to be done, yet these examples change not mens hearts, nor even deter the hardened wretch from committing his atrocious crimes under the very gallows, upon which his unhappy brother is suffering the punishment justly due to his. In vain does the Almighty
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send visitation after visitation, judgment after judgment; except he also send therewith his softening grace: otherwise men would still remain hardened and incorrigible: the *impious* would be *impious*, and the *filthy* would be *filthy* still. The word of the dispensation of this grace is committed unto the ministers of the gospel; but if instead of preaching it pure and unmixed, they adulterate it, to make it more agreeable to mens vitiated tastes; shall we wonder, if instead of experiencing its healing virtues and salubrious qualities, they find it to be only *a savour of death unto death*?

Now what plea, what reason, what excuse can be urged in vindication of the conduct of those ministers, who have perjured themselves and basely betrayed their trust; in not only neglecting to preach the doctrines of the reformation, (which they most solemnly by oath engaged to do); but in rejecting and opposing them, and in villifying all that do preach them? Has the wisdom of this age discovered the nakedness of our venerable reformers? And is it able to correct the wisdom of God displayed in the scriptures? If any of our *great doctors* or *masters of arts*, by digging deep into the profound mysteries of the sciences, exploring the dark caverns of human knowledge, or travelling through the gloomy regions of philosophy, have discovered, by the aid of reason's

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dim light, a PLAN more worthy of our attention, in which the attributes of God better harmonize, more efficacious in changing the corrupt heart of man, in making him a more useful member of society, and in enabling him to live more to his creator's glory, than THAT which we have revealed to us in the scriptures; why e'en let them bring it forth to light, that its superior excellency may be known: let the other be abolished, and the *new-discovered one* be by law established in its stead: and I dare promise them, that if they can produce SUCH A PLAN, your Lordships will readily afford your aid and influence in procuring it all the countenance and support which they themselves can desire. But if there be none hardy enough amongst our learned gentlemen to engage in such an enterprize; in the name of God, let them forbear to oppose, openly or secretly, that which we have: yea, rather, let them abide by it, and make it the matter and the substance of all their discourses: let them remove as fast as possible every thing that tends to obscure the pure light of the gospel, become zealous defenders of its doctrines, and be instant in season and out of season in preaching them. Then will their sacred office be revered, though of late despised; vice, irreligion, and impiety will then be forced to hide themselves in corners; and religion and virtue will

will again lift up their heads and shed their benign and salutary influence around them.

But if instead hereof you remain silent, and neglect to exert your power and influence to the utmost, in causing the doctrines of the reformation to be preached; if you suffer our clergy in general still to go on denying, rejecting, and exploding these doctrines; wonder not, *my Lords, &c.* if our land be no longer esteemed that Eden, that happy isle, (as she has long been) wherein peace and plenty, civil and religious liberty, good polity and good laws, conspire to make her inhabitants the most blest and happy of any people under heaven: the opulence and strength of which render her the dread and envy of other lands: —but if instead thereof, she become the seat of anarchy and confusion, and be shortly overspread with the dark clouds of popish ignorance, superstition, and idolatry: or, if abandoned by God, as she is abandoned to all wickedness, she become the reproach and contempt of every other land, and abjectly subject to a foreign despotic power: since *RIGHTEOUSNESS, which exalts a nation,* is no longer to be found in her; and she abounds with *SIN, which is a reproach to any people.*

It is an old observation, and which has been verified by signal instances in every age; “that
 “ national crimes draw down from heaven na-
 “ tional judgments; and that the sin may be
 “ often

“ often read in the punishment.”—If we attend to the many intimations which God hath given us of his displeasure for some years past, (though not indeed with that severity we had reason to expect) we shall find sufficient proof to confirm this observation. The pestilential disease amongst the cattle—the awful earthquakes—the dreadful conflagrations in our towns and cities—the inundations of water—the long expensive war—the distractions and unsettled situation of the state—the murmurs and clamours abroad and at home—and the cries and riots of the poor for want of bread.—These declare aloud the guilt of our land. And do they not also reprove us for the general abuse of the favours and blessings of heaven? For our luxury and voluptuousness; our pride and ambition; our avarice and love of the world; and our placing too much confidence in an arm of flesh, and forgetting the God that made and upholds us? And these visitations are but the shaking of his rod. Yet if we take not warning, but remain still incorrigible; (as judgments long delayed always fall the heavier) we have great reason to suspect some dreadful vengeance to be yet in store for our guilty, rebellious, ungrateful land.

A general reformation is indisputably wanted; and we have had many loud calls to it. And it

is in your Lordships power, as well as your peculiar province, to use the means, the only probable means, of effecting it; I mean, by a due exertion of your power and influence, in order to revive the doctrines of the reformation in our churches, and to call all men to repentance, and to a belief of those salutary truths, which, with the blessing of God, in impressing them by his Spirit upon the hearts of men, would wonderfully produce such a reformation and change of manners amongst high and low, as would avert the wrath of heaven, and make God still propitious to our highly favoured land. Then would he appoint salvation around us for walls and for bulwarks, and would not turn away from us to do us good; but would be unto us a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of us: our cattle would bring forth thousands and tens of thousands; and our land would yield her increase: righteousness would run down our streets like a mighty stream; and a pure language would be heard amongst us. As these would be the natural consequences and desirable effects produced by your Lordships timely and seasonable interposition; permit me to repeat it to your Lordships, that it is the earnest request and fervent desire of many thousands, that you would speedily call the clergy to an account for their departure from, and
opposition

opposition to, the essential doctrines of our church, as contained in her *articles, homilies, and liturgy*: and that you would oblige them all, to the utmost of your authority, to preach and inculcate them: and also, that proper discipline may be administered, (such as our church prescribes) to all amongst clergy and laity, who shall dare henceforward, from the pulpit or the press, to undermine, oppose, or explode, any of her received, essential truths.

Though it might appear somewhat presumptuous in me, to attempt to direct your Lordships what measures to pursue, in order to accomplish more effectually this reformation; yet I cannot help taking the liberty to hint at one, which would not only facilitate it greatly, if immediately attended to; but which also appears to me to be absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of it. My meaning is, your Lordships having it in your power to ordain to the work of the ministry such only as you please; you may therefore peremptorily and resolutely refuse to ordain all such, (however strongly recommended by their friends) as cannot produce the most undoubted testimonies of their unimpeachable moral characters: and who, upon a strict examination *before your Lordships in person*, cannot give the clearest evidence of their cordial belief of, and steady at-

tachment to, the doctrines of our church; since they lay themselves under the most sacred obligations to preach and abide by them. This would also prevent their entrance into the ministry with a solemn *lie* in their mouths to the *Holy Ghost*: for what less is it, when they answer in the affirmative to that awful, important question, put by your Lordships to each candidate: "Do you trust
 " that you are inwardly moved by the Holy
 " Ghost, &c."—if at the same time they do not firmly believe the doctrines in their hearts, which they thus solemnly take upon them the administration of? It is much to be feared, that the motives and impulses which actuate those that are commonly admitted to holy orders, do not come from the Holy Ghost: but if we may judge from their future conduct, they are inwardly moved by the hopes of a good benefice and church-preferments. And if these are the prevailing motives with our divines, to take the sacred office upon them; we need not be surprized at their conduct afterwards, when we see them solicitous and zealous about nothing so much, as how to advance their worldly interests, and to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Having endeavoured to prove the charge to be just, which I have brought against the generality of the clergy; namely, "that they have renounced
 " the doctrines of our church, and have substi-
 " tuted

“ tuted others in their stead which are quite re-
 “ pugnant to them :” having attempted to make
 it appear, “ that this declension from her doctrines
 “ is the fruitful source of all the evils and calami-
 “ ties whether of amoral, political, or civil nature,
 “ which we at present feel :” and having also
 aimed to point out the only adequate remedy for
 the same ; namely, “ a due exertion of your
 “ power and influence, in causing those doc-
 “ trines to be revived in our churches, and
 “ preached in season and out of season :” what
 remains to be farther done, but to conclude with
 my repeated solicitations, in order to obtain from
you, who have the staff of power in your hands,
 a condescension to this humble and reasonable
 request ?

You must be very sensible, and therefore need
 not be informed by me, that the power, which
 men are at any time invested with, is not designed
 for their use and benefit alone who enjoy it ; but
chiefly, for the good of the community : and
 when it is used to the ends designed, and then
 only, are the subjects of it truly honourable in
 the eyes of those, for whose sake they possess it.
 Those who are exalted to high honours and raised
 to great power in the church, have a trust put into
 their hands as much superior in importance to any
 secular trust, as eternity transcends time. How
 then,

then, *my Lords and reverend Gentlemen*, can you be guiltless before HIM, whose delegates ye are, if you still let your power lie dormant, when he calls so loudly on you, by the voice of his providence, for a due and speedy exertion of it? How will you answer it at HIS GREAT TRIBUNAL, to neglect any longer to call upon all within your several districts, and to compel them, to the utmost of your power, to cry aloud and spare not; to warn a world lying in wickedness, which is led captive by the devil, and which is seeking happiness in *lying vanities*, “to flee from the wrath “to come:” to betake themselves to Jesus Christ, and to seek salvation by the blood of his cross; that they may be found worthy to escape the judgments that are hanging over our guilty land? As captains then of the Lords hosts, may you be induced by these considerations to animate your men, and to stir them up, both by precept and example, to fight manfully the Lord’s battles, and to be valiant for his truth upon the earth. God calls ye to it. And in order to rouse all his servants to some earnestness and zeal in their ministerial callings; as on the one hand, he declares in his word the everlasting honours and distinguished glory that await his faithful stewards in the next world; so also, on the other hand, he pronounces the most awful and bitter curses
on

on those, who have been unfaithful to their trust, *who have done the work of the Lord negligently, and who came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* Yea, in no part of the whole book of God does the wrath and vengeance of the almighty seem to burst forth with so great vehemence and terror, as where the pastors of his people are the objects of it.

For the Lord's sake therefore, and for your own souls sake, as well as of those committed to your charge, delay not to set about this work of the Lord, this *reformation work*: to the end that his judgments may be averted from us, that his cause may again revive and flourish, and that our land may be the joy of the whole earth. Pardon, I intreat you, my well-meant zeal, herein discovered; and impute it not to any want of respect to my superiors, or to any censorious, malevolent spirit towards any man. I should not have been thus warm in my accusations and importunate in my application for redress, if there had not been an alarming necessity for it.

That you may be the happy instruments in the Lord's hands of reviving the reformation-doctrines in our churches, of restraining and suppressing the abominations of the times, and of restoring the cause of vital religion amongst us; that you may long live to enjoy your honours in
the

the church; and after this life is ended, may
shine, as stars of the first magnitude, with distin-
guished lustre in the kingdom of God; is the
prayer of one, who is with great reverence and
respect,

My Lords and Revd. Gentlemen,

10 FE 58

Your most dutiful,

and most obedient

humble servant,

A MEMBER of the CHURCH

